

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HANOI 000776

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [OPDC](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER'S LETTER TO SECRETARY POWELL

Ref: Hanoi 0690

1. (U) Foreign Minister Nien has written to the Secretary ostensibly to cite progress in bilateral ties but in reality to complain about the likely reintroduction in Congress of the Vietnam Human Rights Act and passage or expected passage at the city and state levels of various "flag bills" mandating the usage of the former South Vietnam flag (reftel). He specifically asked for help in opposing both initiatives. The Foreign Ministry will undoubtedly expect a response. Embassy will pouch original to EAP/BCLTV. Full text in para 2.

2. (U) text of letter
quote
Minister for Foreign Affairs
The Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Hanoi, March 26, 2003

TO: H.E. Mr. Colin L. Powell
Secretary of State

SIPDIS

U.S. Department of State

Dear Mr. Secretary,

I am writing to express my satisfaction with the recent positive development in Vietnam-U.S. relations. Well under way are the talks aimed at speeding up the implementation of the Vietnam-U.S. Bilateral Trade Agreement and the Science and Technology Agreement. The first round of talks on a Textile Agreement has been initiated and the last productive round of negotiation on the Aviation Accord has helped to narrow down the two sides' differences in this matter. Notably, the success of the 13rd Annual Asia Corporate Conference recently held in Hanoi by the Asia Society and Dow Jones & Company in collaboration with Vietnamese relevant agencies, has contributed to strengthening the investment and trade ties as well as the mutual understanding between our two countries.

To ensure further development of the two countries' relations along this positive line, it is most essential to create a favorable political environment. And you would agree with me this requires constructive efforts from both sides.

As you may know, more than a year ago, the U.S. House of Representatives' passage of the Bill H.R. 2833 on Human rights in Vietnam resulted in a profound and widespread disappointment among the Vietnamese people. Fortunately, thanks to the understanding and cooperation of the U.S. members of congress, particularly with the kind attention and efforts of yourself and your staff, this bill has been dropped. However, some U.S. congressmen have recently been trying to re-introduce this very bill to the House of Representatives. Negative impact on the Vietnam-U.S. relationship would therefore be extremely grave. Moreover, while noting with appreciation the cooperation of the U.S. Government and your State Department in handling the Bill No 2829 of the House of State of Virginia related to the deceased Saigon regime's flag, we are now very much concerned about recent moves by some City Councils in several cities, namely, Westminster, Garden Grove, California. They have endorsed resolutions allowing the flag to be displayed at public buildings, schools, and at public functions of the Vietnamese-American community in those cities. Moreover, we have just learned that the draft resolution ACR 68 is now being introduced at the Assembly of California. Such actions have rekindled the past of hatred among the Vietnamese-American communities in several other cities such as San Jose, Oakland, Santa Ana, Midway City, Huntington Beach, undermining the on-going process of national reconciliation and unity of the whole population of Vietnam. At the same time, these actions have sent wrong signals about the U.S. Government policy as well as its observance of the law in this regard, namely to recognize only the National Flag of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in our bilateral diplomatic relations. Such above-mentioned developments are causing great disappointment within the Government and the entire people of Vietnam, obstructing the on-going process of mutual understanding promotion and

damaging our greater and long-term interests in the Vietnam-U.S. relations.

I do hope that, with your noble and responsible position, you and your capable staff in the Department of State would take all appropriate and timely measures to prevent and remove for good the Vietnam Human Rights Bill as well as the issue of allowing the display of the former regime's flag from our bilateral relations. This will make a necessary move to contribute to our joint efforts to go beyond the past and towards the future, in line with the realities and vast interests of the relations between the Governments and peoples of Vietnam and the United States.

Please accept, Mr. Secretary, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration. I look forward to meeting you in person to discuss new steps to accelerate our bilateral relations.

Yours sincerely,

/s/ Dy Nien /s/
Nguyen Dy Nien
end quote
BURGHARDT